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C O N F I D E N T I A L OSLO 000613

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SCA/INS (GOWER)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/03/2016
TAGS: [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [CE](#) [NO](#)
SUBJECT: SRI LANKA CO-CHAIRS MEETING IN OSLO

Classified By: Mike Hammer, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

The following Oslo cable sent May 3, 2006 to the following addressees:

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QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L OSLO 000551

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DEPT FOR SCA/INS (GOWER)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/03/2016
TAGS: [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [CE](#) [NO](#)
SUBJECT: SRI LANKA CO-CHAIRS MEETING IN OSLO

Classified By: Pol/Econ Counselor Mike Hammer, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

1. (C) Summary. Representatives of the Sri Lanka Co-Chairs (Norway, Japan, the EU, and the U.S.) met in Oslo on April 28 in an emergency session to discuss the deteriorating situation in Sri Lanka and plan for a follow-on meeting in Tokyo. Assistant Secretary for South and Central Asian Affairs Richard A. Boucher, head of the U.S. delegation, pressed for expanded international cooperation, outside the Co-Chairs group, to cut off financing and arms supplies to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). U.S. goals for the meeting were to push for new solutions to pressure the Tigers and deliver the message that changing their behaviors will lead to political acceptance. The U.S. team also initiated discussion on how to make it clear to the Government of Sri Lanka that it must address Tamil grievances and find a long-term solution to the conflict. End summary.

Briefings and Proposals

2. (C) Norwegian Special Envoy Jon Hanssen-Bauer briefed on the situation on the ground, emphasizing both sides have breached the ceasefire and that the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission will present a full report at the next round of talks

in Geneva. He said during his last discussions with government and Tiger negotiators on April 27, both sides indicated they were still committed to the ceasefire and to going to Geneva. He characterized a second round of talks as likely to be limited in scope, adding Tiger negotiators will want to focus on the ceasefire agreement and the government's commitments made at the first round of talks.

13. (C) The Special Envoy indicated discussions on arrangements for LTTE consultative meetings leading up to Geneva were underway. He emphasized a standard procedure must be established for transporting LTTE cadres for consultations for future meetings in order to prevent the delays that have plagued this second round of talks.

14. (C) Minister of International Development Erik Solheim cautioned that the Sri Lankan government has "promised a lot but has not kept its promises" in its dealings with the LTTE. As an example, he noted the government has not delivered on Karuna, as they committed to do in the first round of Geneva talks. In contrast, Solheim said the LTTE and in particular Prabhakaran, are "brutal and don't value human life but keep their promises." Participants agreed the best possible outcome for a second round of talks would be a commitment from both sides to additional talks to reach a long-term solution.

15. (C) Ambassador Lunstead presented the U.S. proposal that the international community do more to cut off LTTE funding and weapons procurement. He proposed countries with large Tamil diaspora communities, such as the U.S., Canada, Australia, the UK, France, Switzerland, and Germany, share information and possibly conduct joint operations to cut back on Tiger financing. A similar group to take action on Tiger arms procurement would focus on southeast Asian countries, including Thailand, Indonesia, and Cambodia, where the Tiger network operates.

16. (C) The other Co-Chairs, especially Norway and Japan, responded positively to this suggestion but made it clear the Co-Chairs group lacks the mandate for such activities and therefore any action must be taken by a new group of interested countries. Assistant Secretary Boucher committed to discussing the issue with the Canadians. Ambassador Lunstead suggested the Co-Chairs endorse the new group. Participants agreed to discuss the proposal in greater detail in Tokyo.

17. (C) Assistant Secretary Boucher pushed for expanded participation by interested countries at the Co-Chairs meeting in Tokyo and suggested inviting the Canadians. The EU noted the December Co-Chairs meeting in Brussels reached consensus not to expand Co-Chairs membership, but did want to increase cooperation with interested countries. The group agreed to invite Canada, India, and possibly other interested countries to a separate meeting (or meetings) in Tokyo.

18. (C) Assistant Secretary Boucher pressed EU and Norwegian participants on the LTTE listing issue. The EU stressed consultations between EU member states on this issue "will take time." Solheim requested the issue be discussed outside the Co-Chairs mechanism. He said Norway's unique position as facilitator to the peace process made it difficult to consider listing.

19. (C) The EU suggested Karuna leadership be included in discussions, if only to use as leverage in negotiations with the LTTE. The other Co-Chairs did not support this proposal.

Coordination With India

10.(C) The Co-Chairs met with the Indian Ambassador to Norway at a separate meeting after the formal Co-Chairs meeting ended. Making it clear he was drawing from "instructions," the Indian representative outlined his government's position on the peace process in Sri Lanka. He

reiterated Indian support for Norwegian facilitation; stressed both parties should "commence dialogue" as soon as possible; noted the Indian government had advised the government of Sri Lanka to exercise restraint, adding President Rajapaksa had reassured the Indian High Commissioner that there would be no further escalation of violence on the part of the government; and urged the Co-Chairs to send a strong message to the LTTE that "they cannot bomb their way into the talks." He cautioned that if the Tigers accomplished their objectives by an outbreak of violence following a long stalemate, such tactics would eventually be accepted as a fait accompli.

11.(C) The Co-Chairs discussed their plans with the Indian representative to rethink their role in Sri Lanka and asked how India might use its "vital role" in South Asia to take on a new role in Sri Lanka as well. Assistant Secretary Boucher stressed the Co-Chairs, priorities were to "keep the door open" to peace talks and push both parties to stop the violence. He outlined the U.S. proposal for action outside the Co-Chairs, stressing "we look upon India as one country that can help." Turning to the possibility of LTTE financing coming from Tamil Nadu, the Indian representative noted he "would not rule it out." He said his government is "very concerned" about the situation in Sri Lanka and ties to India, suggesting the conflict is playing a role in upcoming elections in Tamil Nadu.

12.(C) Solheim committed to keeping the Indians informed of Tokyo arrangements and suggested they send a representative from New Delhi to the meeting.

Preparations for Tokyo

13.(C) The Co-Chairs agreed to use the follow-on meeting in Tokyo, tentatively scheduled for May 30 to allow Under Secretary Nick Burns to participate, to re-examine their role

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in Sri Lanka and develop new ways of doing things.

14.(C) Special Envoy Jon Hanssen-Bauer delegated seven papers that will form the basis of the May 30 meeting and volunteered Norway to serve as the clearinghouse to coordinate drafting. The papers and their assigned drafter are as follows: a review of the Tokyo Declaration (Japan); definitions of the basic needs of both parties to solve the conflict (Norway); a roadmap or timetable outlining possible scenarios (Norway); a review of assistance and premises for donor assistance (all); an overview of incentive systems, including what the Co-Chairs are doing now and new proposals (U.S.); a review of the Co-Chairs mandate and role (EU); and a review of additional alliances and mechanisms to provide support to the peace process (U.S).

Press Conference

15.(C) The four heads of delegation participated in a press conference, which Solheim led by characterizing the meeting as an "emergency" session and calling on both parties to "stop the violence and go back to negotiations." He confirmed both parties continued to discuss the transportation issue to allow LTTE cadres to deliberate before deciding on whether to go to Geneva. He also summarized Co-Chairs discussions, noting the day's most significant outcomes were agreement to meet again in Tokyo and preparations for a "plan for the peace process" to be finalized in Tokyo.

Statement

16.(C) The Co-Chairs also released a statement, the text of

which follows:

The Co-Chairs of the Tokyo Donor Conference (the European Union and the Governments of Japan, the United States, and Norway) met in Oslo on 28 April for Consultations.

The purpose of the meeting was to assess the serious situation in Sri Lanka and examine how Co-Chairs could most effectively respond to it.

Co-Chairs reiterated their deep concern at the recent deterioration of the situation in Sri Lanka, condemning all acts of violence and calling on this to stop.

The Co-Chairs from the EU, Japan and USA reaffirmed their support to the Norwegian peace facilitators.

The Co-Chairs have decided to meet again in Tokyo to further discuss steps and concerted actions to encourage the parties to pursue a durable solution in Sri Lanka. End text.

17. (U) This message was cleared by A/S Boucher.
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